



Title: Animal Husbandry in the Soviet Union USSR Dr. W. Schmidt

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 ANIMAL HUSBANDRY IN THE SOVIET UNION

SUMMARY

Dr. W. Schmidt

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Goslar, Germany

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The writer's experience with animal husbandry in the USSR stems from his years (1941 - 1944) with the German armed forces and later (1944 - 1945) as a prisoner of war in the western regions of the Soviet Union. His work as a veterinarian during these latter years took him to a great many different regions such as Vilna, the area between Duena and Volga, around Velikiyluki, Toropjez, Ranev, Viasma, Smolensk, Briansk, Sevak, Orel, Homel, Kalinkowitschi, Petrikoff, Roerovomask, Uman, and parts of the regions of Kalinin and Gorki.

During the years between 1941 and 1944 the troops soon discovered the value of the small native ponies over the larger, heavier German draft and riding horses. The needs of these small horses were modest and they were able to recuperate very quickly after a period of short rations.

Dr. Schmidt describes the various types of horses in the Red Army and their ability to withstand hardships. He describes the manner in which animals, horses, cattle, swine, sheep, and goats are kept and bred in the "Animal kolхоз" of the Red Army, pointing out the special care given the brood mares and their colts, the cows and calves, etc. He points out that with the increasing use of motors since nationalization, the horse does not play as important a role as it did formerly. It is now used mainly to help plow cultivated fields, bring in the crops, serve as riding animals, and generally pinch hit where motors break down.

The breeding of animals is described in considerable detail by the author. Artificial insemination was - theoretically - well known and the Russians claimed

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its invention by "Ivanov" with considerable pride. However, it was not practiced to nearly as great an extent as might be expected from reading professional literature.

Cattle were raised especially as milk producers and as work animals. Milk production amounted to between 1200 and 1800 liters per cow per day. Few domestic animals were kept by individual families, excepting perhaps sheep and goats which were found even in the middle sized cities. Since individuals were limited to owning not more than approximately 50 ar² of land, all of it was needed to grow food for the family, and none could be spared to feed and animal during the long winter months.

The keeping of fowl was usually limited to a few birds only. The author found only one Red Army Kolхоз near Kalinin with a flock of about 30 white Leghorns.

The many swampy regions in the flat lands of European Russia are a great obstacle to agriculture. Summers are hot and short. After the long, severe winters, grasses and grain grow fast as soon as the snows melt, but the summers are often too short to allow them to grow to full height and maturity which, in turn, does not furnish enough adequate feed for the animals during winter.

The Soviet Union is most of all a grain land and animal husbandry is of secondary importance. The low living standards of the population will finally be raised and there will be greater emphasis on the raising of domestic animals - especially since the average Soviet citizen has a great love and understanding for the animals under his care.

(*One ar - an area of a square with sides 10 m long.)

/ approx. 1.235 acres.

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